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Essays in Municipal Administration. By JOHN A. FAIRLIE. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1908. Pp. 374.)

In an attractive volume Professor Fairlie has brought together a number of essays, nineteen in all, which he has written at different times upon various matters within the general field of municipal administration. The essays fall into three groups, the first relating to problems of organization and the relations of cities to the State. In a second group are placed those which deal with divers civic functions and activities, while a third division of the book includes four interesting essays on city government in various European countries. A short chapter on the methods of instruction in municipal government concludes the volume.

During the last ten years or more Professor Fairlie has been one of the most generous as well as one of the most informing contributors to the literature of municipal administration, and students of this subject will doubtless welcome this volume which places at their disposal, in convenient form, many interesting discussions heretofore scattered about in publications which were not always easy to obtain. Having been written for different audiences the essays vary considerably in scope, in method of presentation, and in the degree of thoroughness with which they undertake to deal with their respective topics. The chapter on Municipal Corporations in the Colonies, for example, embodies quite the most painstaking study which has yet been undertaken in this field, and leaves little more to be said upon the subject. On the other hand the essays which deal with matters of administration in European cities do not profess to be more than the gleanings of a vacation tour, written in an easy vein for the information of newspaper readers. Even these are of very distinct value, nevertheless, as embodying the shrewd observations of one who has been trained to the exercise of an unbiased and scientific judgment on matters of local administration, and who is, moreover, able to bring to bear upon the special problems of Vienna, Milan, or Birmingham, a useful store of general administrative knowledge.

All the essays give evidence of the writer's breadth of view, his passion for accuracy in even the smallest details, and his ability to state his facts logically and his opinions forcibly. Special attention ought to be directed to the chapters on The Relation of Civil Service Reform to Municipal Administration and on American Municipal Councils, in which these qualities of merit most prominently appear. In an age when the cause of municipal reform must needs stand sponsor for much that is written with more zeal than knowledge, the sober, analytical spirit of these essays makes them doubly welcome.

WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO.